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# INFOPOLITIC

## Romanian Politics

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8 April

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Democracy

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### IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

1. **RESEARCH.** Victor Ponta: The fact that over 250 million Euros go into research is the best thing.
2. **FOREIGN POLICY.** Victor Ponta declared that Romania's international partners appreciate the seriousness of the current Government.
3. **VAT.** Victor Ponta: While I am Prime Minister the 24% VAT will not be reverted for bakery products.
4. **POLLS.** Polls confirm the predominant position of the PSD.



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## VICTOR PONTA: THE FACT THAT OVER 250 MILLION EUROS GO INTO RESEARCH IS THE BEST THING

Prime Minister Victor Ponta, PSD President, said Thursday, April 3, 2014, **that the allocation of European funds for research and for supporting the work of PhD students and post-doctoral students is the best investment for the future.**

'If we succeeded earlier this year, still on European funds on the regional operational program, to allocate 150 million Euros for school infrastructure - absolutely imperative – the fact that today more than 250 million Euros go into human investments, people who have to continue a positive way for our society, I think that is by far the best investment', said Ponta at the signing of contracts with the beneficiaries of the research projects funded by the Sectoral Operational Program for the Development of Human Resources and through the Operational Program for the Increase of Economic Competitiveness.

'When in 2012 many people and institutions came and told us how bad is the fact that the SOPDHR or the program for the increase of competitiveness are suspended (...), universities, research institutes or students never came to complain to us, and today I see that more than 5,700 PhD students, post-doctoral students, universities, various research institutions are benefitting from European funds, I can only thank them that in those difficult moments they had patience. (...) Thank God that the two programs were unblocked, that the money was refunded and that from now on a lot of those who deserve it will clearly benefit from these programs", said the Prime Minister.



**The chief of the Executive praised all the recipients of funding for research**, but especially those 15 young Olympics receiving the Young Researcher Scholarship.

**'I am glad that another 14 young researchers receive a scholarship** which rightly has the name of Ionut (Budişteanu, Olympic), but I think of all those PhD students, post doctoral students who deserve to be supported. Well, I will tell them not to enter into politics, to stay with the doctoral and the research part', said Victor Ponta.

The event was attended by the Minister for Higher Education, Scientific Research and Technological Development, Mihnea Costoiu and the Minister of EU Funds, Eugen Teodorovici, PSD Senator.

**"Today we signed the contracts for more than 300 million Euros and this amount, most of it, comes from European funds. (...) Today 35 projects will be signed** (dedicated to researchers – e.n.), for 18 months, the amount of financial assistance being around 93 million Euros. Over 3,700 PhD students and over 1,900 post doctoral researchers will be supported, who enroll their research in priority areas established under the National Strategy for Research - Development. The monthly amount of the scholarship received by young people is 1,800 RON per PhD student and 3,700 RON for each post doctoral researcher. These add up to the over **7,235 PhD students and 644 post doctoral researchers** supported thus far, with more than 250 million Euros", said the Minister for Higher Education, Scientific Research and Technological Development, Mihnea Costoiu .

**VICTOR PONTA ADDED THAT ROMANIA'S INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS APPRECIATE THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT**



'Note that all our international partners appreciate our seriousness, ask us not to repeat what happened in 2009, when everyone was in the presidential campaign and promised milk and honey, and then, in 2010, havoc. We must not promise milk and honey, we should tell people the truth. **We have more money, and I checked, we have received for the first quarter 1.5 billion lei more compared to the first quarter of 2013**, but the money does not come heaven, come from taxes and a better collection and a wiser way to spend the money available", the PM said.

Prime Minister Victor Ponta, PSD President, **said that halving the rates may apply from July 1.**

Prime Minister Victor Ponta, PSD President, said Wednesday, March 26, 2014, **that the application of the emergency ordinance on the tax scheme for the restructuring of household loans will apply from July 1.**

"From July 1, that halving of the rate may apply for a period of two years, the tax credit shall enter into force in 2016, after two years", said Victor Ponta, after a meeting at the BNR with Governor Mugur Isarescu.

On the other hand, asked to comment on the statements of the Minister for the Information Society, Razvan Cotovelea, who criticized ANAF services provided to citizens, Ponta replied: 'Very well, we need to improve them. That tax services are bad, it is obvious and obviously the Minister has this among her objectives, namely computerization, digitization. Like this, we state our opinion, it is easy to give our opinion, we must also do things'.

**Prime Minister Victor Ponta, PSD President, urged members of the Government to continue the same line of conduct** and seriousness appreciated by Romania's international partners and to announce only the measures



that can be carried out, so that 2015 to be 'a bit better than 2014' and not to repeat what happened in 2009.

"I want to ask all members of the cabinet that together with me not to repeat the tragedy of 2009. The tragedy when we tell people that everything is perfect, **that we do not have to increase the VAT, that we do not have to increase taxes, that we have money for salaries and pensions because afterwards came 2010. I want 2015 to be a year a little better for the people than 2014.** And that means to be serious and announce just what we can do, even if we lose the election points to the demagogues. I think we do well and we do good for Romania ", the Prime Minister said Wednesday at the Government meeting.

## **VICTOR PONTA: WHILE I AM PRIME MINISTER THE 24% VAT WILL NOT BE REVERTED FOR BAKERY PRODUCTS**

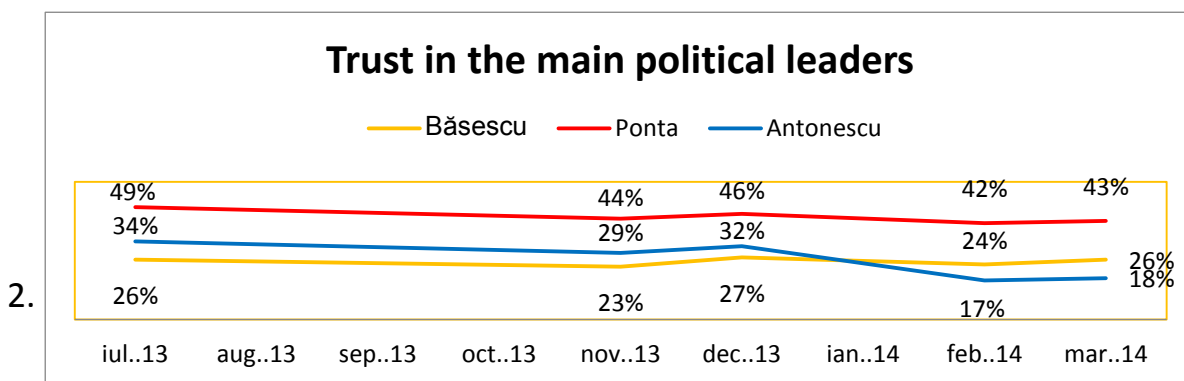
Prime Minister Victor Ponta, PSD President, said Wednesday, April 2, 2014, that **the increase in fuel duty was not due to the reduction of the VAT for bakery products and that there is no possibility that the VAT will be reverted, in the future, at the level of 24% for these products.**

**"There will be no reverting.** While I am Prime Minister it will not be reverted. Perhaps Mr. Basescu will be Prime Minister, because when he becomes Prime Minister will cut wages and pensions and the VAT. He did it once. I have never increased it (VAT), but only reduced it. (...) It was not (the reduction of the VAT on bread a reason for the increase in fuel duty)", said the Prime Minister, at the Parliament Palace.

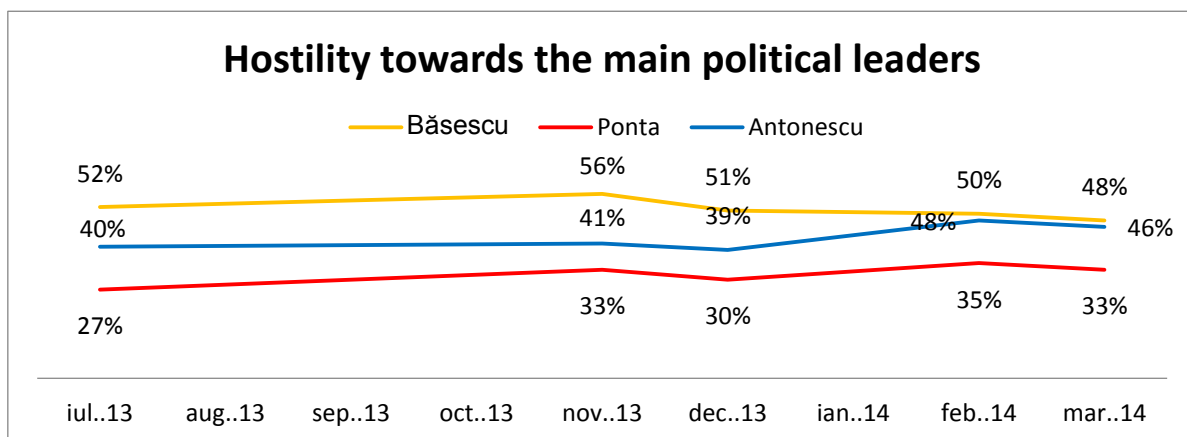


## POLLS CONFIRM THE PREDOMINANT POSITION OF THE PSD

1. **Crin Antonescu is consistently losing confidence after the breaking of the USL** and does not seem to recover. The Liberal is now placing himself under Basescu regarding public confidence. Antonescu is electorally limited to Liberal supporters. Neither USL supporters, nor Basescu's supporters trust him now. PM Ponta remains the most respected political leader, although he also recorded a small rebound after the breaking of the USL.



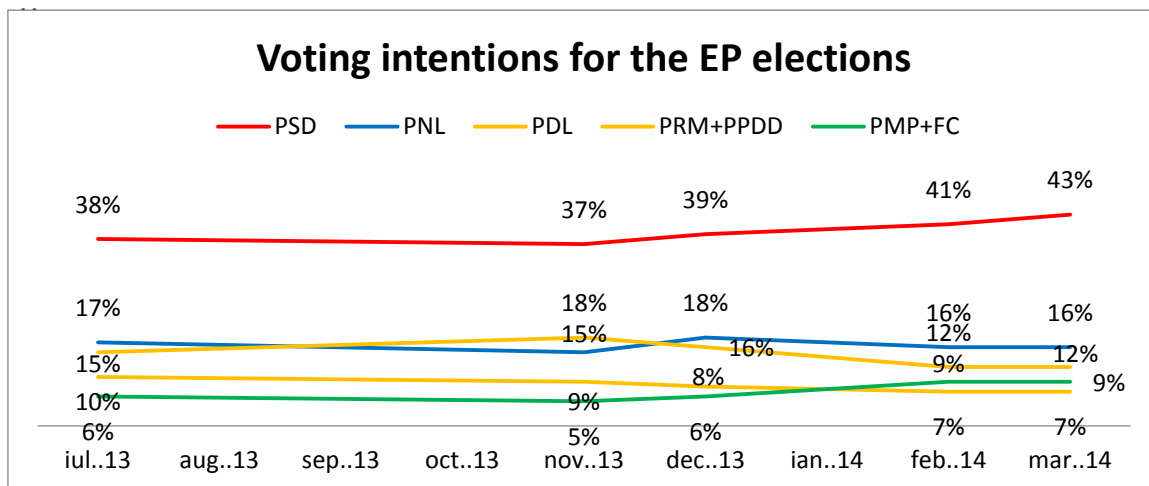
**ian Basescu is still the most polarizing political character in Romania.** One in two Romanians has no confidence in him and



almost automatically rejects any message coming from the President. Crin Antonescu is getting close to this level, especially after the breaking of the USL. Although the hostility to Prime Minister Ponta increased, he is still far below the other two important leaders.

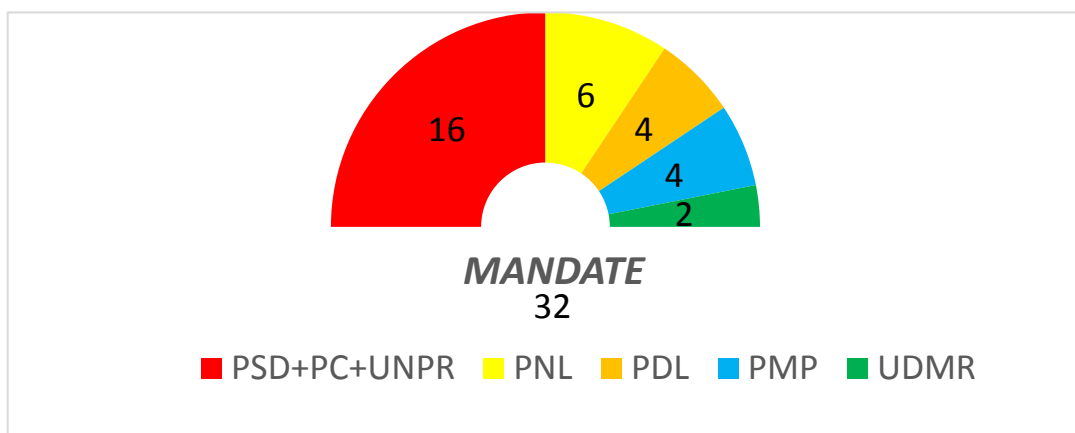


3. With the European elections approaching, the **PSD succeeds to mobilize voters better, increasing to 45%**. PNL is still well below its stated goal of 25%, while the PDL and PMP share the same electorate, about 21% of voters, in different proportions. By now, scores of anti-system parties are low and seems unlikely to rise



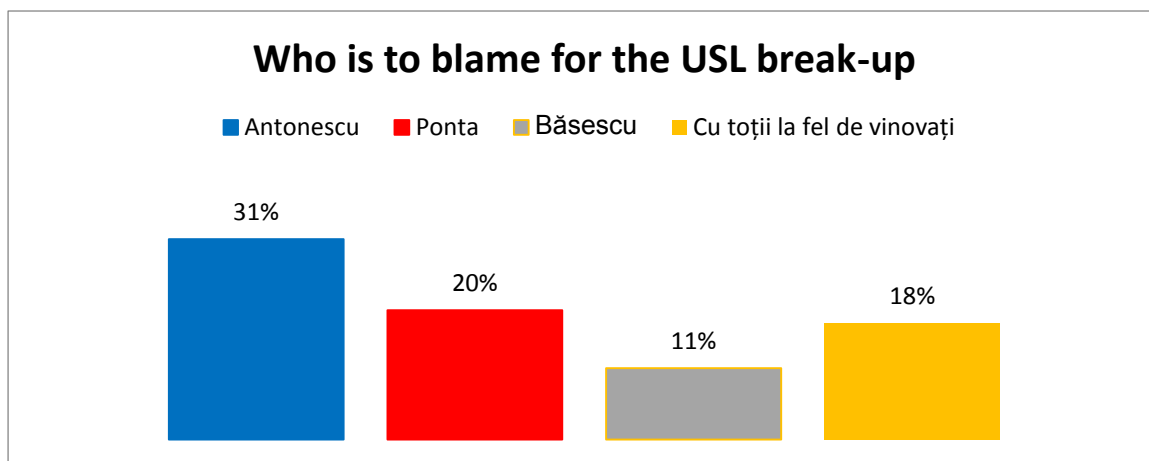
At the moment, turnout is estimated at 41%.

4. With the current score in the polls, **PSD would get 16 out of 32 seats for the European Parliament**. In 2009, PSD won 11 seats. PNL would get 6 seats in the current simulation, with a seat more than in 2009, when it won 15% of the votes and five seats. PDL and PMP would get 4 seats each. In these circumstances, PMP will be presented as the equal of PDL, which would be a victory for the newly formed party. In 2009, PDL alone won 10 seats.





5. **Crin Antonescu is seen as the primarily responsible for breaking the USL.** One in three Romanians deems him guilty. Next on the list is Victor Ponta, considered responsible by 20% of Romanians. It is noteworthy that Basescu is seen as responsible for dividing



the USL, which could reopen the conflict fault and the reporting conflict and the pro/against competition in relating to Traian Basescu. At the same time, keeping (the discourse) active of the "USL Project", creates difficulties for Antonescu and restricts his action space.